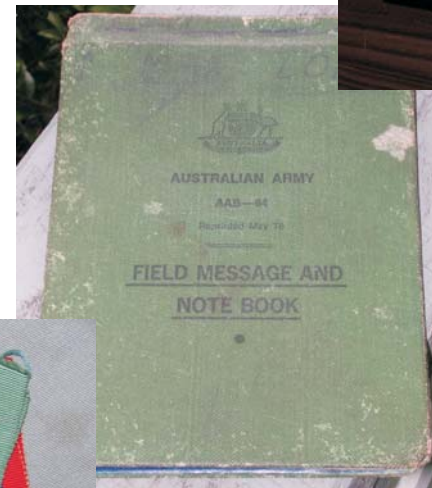


# Finding treasures at home

## Exploring family memorabilia



## Many Australians have a military heritage.

Members of your family, men and women, present and past, may have served in the Army, Navy, Air Force or Red Cross during war times. Others may have stayed home to make weapons, or to keep the farm or family going.

Many families keep memorabilia to remind them of these intense, demanding and difficult times in their lives. These memorabilia are often emotionally charged items. They can tell us much, and reveal fascinating stories if we know how to 'interpret' them—to ask the best questions. In this activity you will see how to:

- find military memorabilia in your family
- work out what that memorabilia tells you about the person to whom it belongs
- decide why the family has kept that memorabilia
- value the place of that memorabilia in your family's history.

The **first step** is to discover if you have any military memorabilia in your family. It might be:

- 'Dog Tags'
- Photographs
- Personal equipment
- Badges
- Trench Art and many other possibilities.
- Medals
- Souvenirs
- Diaries
- Maps
- Clothing
- Letters or postcards
- Colour patches
- Certificates

So have a look and ask your family. If you are successful the following pages will help you to find out about the meanings and stories the memorabilia might reveal.

Even if you do not find any special things in your family it is still possible to explore the sorts of memorabilia that people keep by looking at one of the Queensland Museum Education Kits *Queensland Remembers* (see details on this page), or the Australian War Memorial's Memorial Box program (see [www.awm.gov.au](http://www.awm.gov.au)).

## Memorabilia

In an effort to provide young people with a better understanding of war, the ANZAC Day Commemoration Committee of Queensland (ADCC) and Queensland Museum Loans service have entered a partnership that will see donations of military memorabilia used in educational wartime kits titled *Queensland Remembers*. The aim of the kits is to help children understand more about the great sacrifices made by men and women at war. The kits will include artefacts from any of the wars in which Australians have been involved, from the First and Second World Wars, to the Korean and Vietnam Wars and conflicts in the Gulf, Timor and Afghanistan. The items included will represent the three Services as well as contributions made by women and Indigenous communities.

The *Queensland Remembers* kits will be an invaluable teaching resource. Using Queensland Museum Loans expertise the kits will give students a unique and very tangible understanding of war service.

At least nine kits are available for Queensland schools to borrow as at January 2005. A further 24 kits are to be produced by 2007. Contents may include:

- Service medals and clasps
- Badges and officers' pips from a selection of ranks/professions, e.g. Rising Sun, peace, pilot's wings, services rendered, NORFORCE, cloth badges
- Buttons from a selection of ranks/ professions including British and American
- Hats (e.g. steel helmet, slouch hat with puggaree, RAN cap, RAAF cap, service beret)
- Clothing from World War 1, World War 2, Vietnam War, WRAAF, WRAN (e.g. part of naval uniform—black silks, blue jean collar, lanyard; Army uniform—puttee, jacket, walking out uniform, dress uniform; Air Force uniform—jacket, DCPU clothing; Red Cross clothing—apron, caps, cape)
- Personal equipment, e.g. Princess Mary box, water bottle, dixies, Lisle stocking, mess kit, web equipment—belts, pouches
- Other materials, e.g. Two-up game, field dressing, bayonet scabbard and frog, practice round
- Gas mask (any condition)
- Printed material, e.g. correspondence, telegrams, newspaper articles, maps, postcards, magazines, certificates
- Colour patches and stripes
- Trench art
- Photographs

For more information contact:

Queensland Museum Loans

P (07) 3406 8344

[Loans@qm.qld.gov.au](mailto:Loans@qm.qld.gov.au)

F (07) 3406 8355

[www.Qmuseum.qld.gov.au/education/loans](http://www.Qmuseum.qld.gov.au/education/loans)

# Investigating Memorabilia **STEP 1**

## What is it? What does it tell us?

The first step is to identify the memorabilia, and to ask questions. Here are some questions and exercises to start your 'interpretation'.

### Medals

Here are four medals issued to a famous Australian, Sir Charles Kingsford Smith.



**Military Cross (MC)**  
'Awarded for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty.'



**1914-15 Star**  
Awarded to Australian sailors, soldiers, airmen and nurses who served in any place where World War 1 was fought during those years (for most Australians this meant at Gallipoli).



**British War Medal 1914-20**  
Awarded for overseas service in a war area during part of those years.



**Victory Medal**  
Awarded to any sailor, soldier, airman and nurse who had served in any overseas service in a war area at any time during World War 1.

#### INFORMATION

Most military medals are awarded to acknowledge service in a particular area or campaign. There are also some medals for bravery, and some for distinguished service.

#### QUESTIONS

- What medal is it?
- To whom was it awarded? (You should examine the edges of the medal as well as both sides.)
- When was it issued?
- Where did the person serve?
- What information is on the medal?
- Are the shape and colour significant?
- Is the ribbon significant?

#### Medals that my family treasure help me understand my military heritage by:

**1** Use this information to decide if the following statements are likely to be true or false, or if you cannot tell from this evidence.

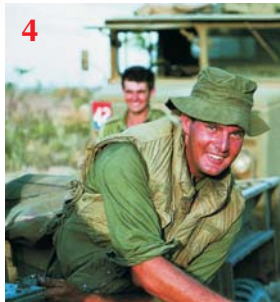
**Charles Kingsford Smith:**

	TRUE	FALSE	CANNOT TELL
Fought in World War 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Served at Gallipoli	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Died during the war	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Served overseas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was brave	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(For illustrations of and information about medals awarded to Australians go to [www.anzacday.org.au/education/medals](http://www.anzacday.org.au/education/medals))

## Clothing

Here are some images showing Australian military uniform and clothing.



1 Identify which of these eras each image is associated with—World War 1, World War 2, Vietnam War, peacekeeping, modern anti-terrorism and make your choices in the accompanying table.

### INFORMATION

Australian military clothing styles, colours and materials have changed greatly during the last century. Uniforms vary in their use—some are worn for ceremonial or formal wear, others for everyday wear, and combat clothing is worn in fighting situations. Clothing is powerfully personal. Examine the garments inside and out—you may find surprising clues about its owner.

### QUESTIONS

- What does it look like?
- What colour is it?
- How does it feel?
- Is there anything in the pockets or attached to it?
- What is it made from?
- Does it have a special use?
- Are there any signs of wear (rips, holes, burns) decoration, repair or alteration? What does this indicate?
- How effective would it have been?
- Can you find a name or service number to trace its owner's history?
- What would it have looked like when it was being used?

Image #	Image source	Associated era				
		World War 1	World War 2	Vietnam War	peacekeeping	modern anti-terrorism
1	AWM H16063					
2	AWM 42075					
3	ADF					
4	ADCC					
5	AWM 026616					
6	AWM MSU/94/0014/31					
7	ADCC					

2 Describe some of the main changes over time that have taken place in Australian military clothing, and comment on how effective you think they would be.

Main changes in Australian military clothing:

3 Museum displays often show the image, rather than the reality. Compare this idealised image on the left with the photograph on the right taken in a combat area.



(Tony Hall (ed), *Pearl Harbor and the War in the Pacific*, Salamander Books Ltd, London, 1991 page 102)



(AWM 013731/6)

What does this suggest you have to do when you examine memorabilia from home or museum boxes? [Write your answer below.]

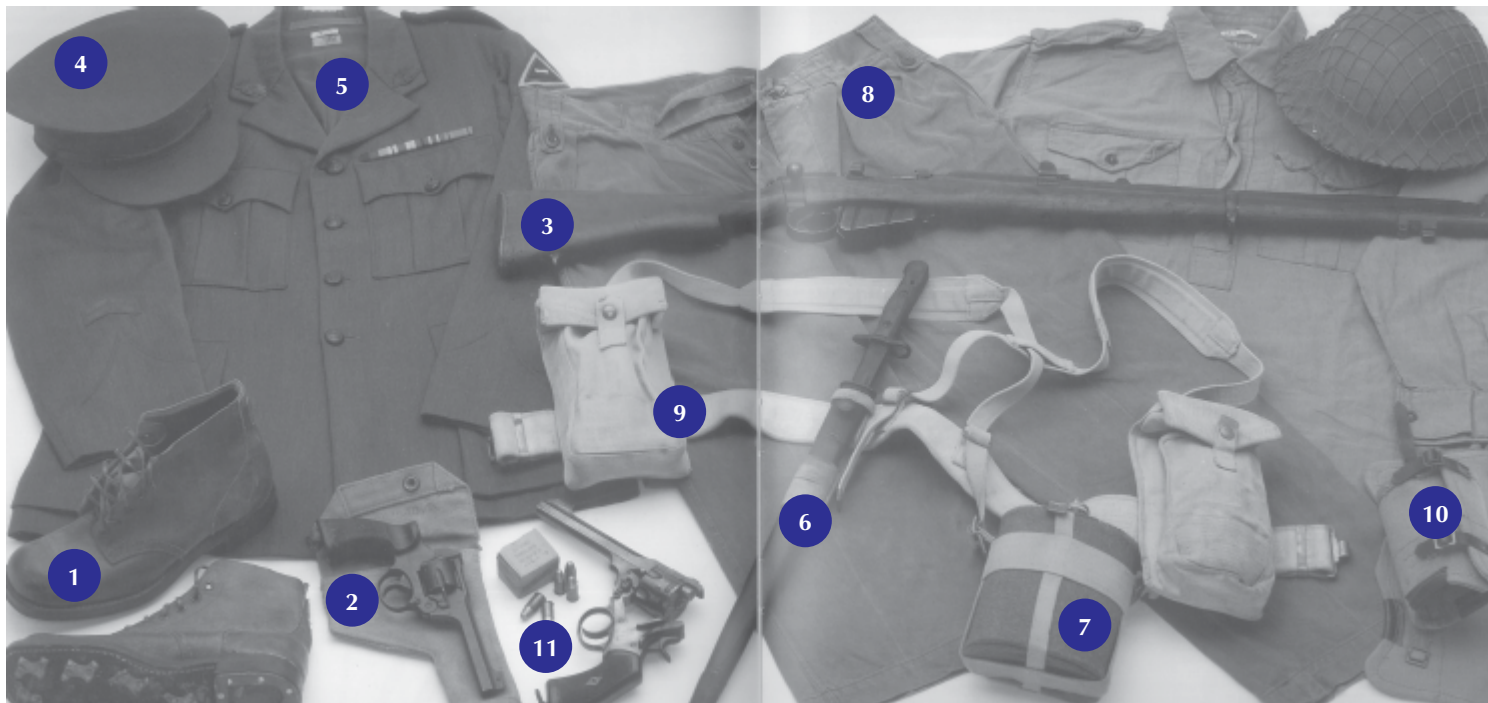
Clothing that my family treasure helps me understand my military heritage by:

## Personal equipment

Here are some examples of equipment from opposing Australian and Japanese forces in Papua New Guinea during World War 2. While the two collections are not directly comparable, they both show a variety of equipment used in World War 2.

1 Match the objects with the descriptions on this and the next page and write your answers in the tables provided.

### Australian equipment



#### INFORMATION

A lot of equipment is issued to members in the services. Some of it is for everyday personal use, some of it for particular needs or occasions.

#### QUESTIONS

- What is it?
- What was it used for?
- Why would this person have it?
- What does it tell us about what the person did?
- When would it be used?
- What does it tell us about the nature of the activity?

Image from: Tony Hall (ed), *Pearl Harbor and the War in the Pacific*, Salamander Books Ltd, London, 1991 pages 106-7)

Item	Item #
Pattern 1908 canteen	
Webbing gaiters	
Officer's peaked cap, 1943	
Enfield pistol with web holder	
Pattern 1907 sword bayonet	
Brown leather combat boots with brass cleats, 1944	
Web gear including waist belt, combat harness, bayonet frog and two ammunition pouches each holding 50 rounds of .303 bullets or two grenades	
Officer's service dress jacket with Rising Sun badges	
Lee Enfield .303 rifle manufactured at Lithgow, NSW	
Tropical field trousers of olive drab denim c.1944	
Webley pistol with ammunition	

## Japanese equipment

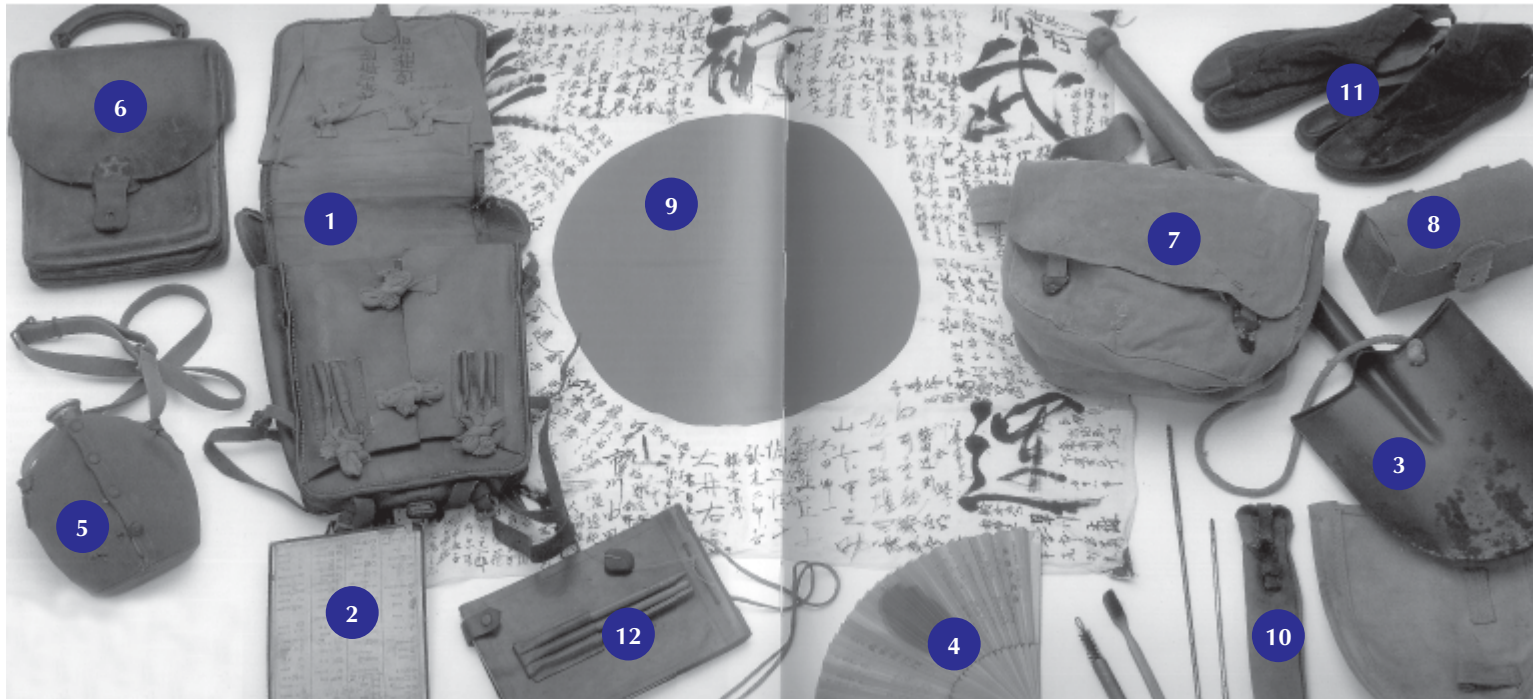


Image from: (Tony Hall (ed), *Pearl Harbor and the War in the Pacific*, Salamander Books Ltd, London, 1991 pages 104-5)

Item	Item #
Canvas haversack for carrying rations and personal items	
Clear plastic map holder carried in leather map case	
Entrenching tool	
Hand fan bearing the Japanese national anthem	
Japanese officer's canteen	
Japanese officer's leather document case	
Japanese officer's leather map case, worn on a shoulder strap	
One of three ammunition boxes carried by a soldier	
Personal, patriotic good luck flag inscribed to the soldier by friends, family or associates, with prayers for good fortune, honour and the emperor	
Rifle cleaning components and carry bag (5 items)	
Rubber-soled, canvas-upper shoes with separated big toe socket ('Tabi')	
Writing tablet and pencils also carried in map case	

Personal equipment that my family treasure helps me understand my military heritage by:

## Photographs

1 Look at these photographs. They were taken by an Australian member of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) in Japan at the end of World War 2.



(Geoff Cameron)

### INFORMATION

Many service people photographed people, places and events during their period of duty. These pictorial records can tell us much about the photographer and his or her experiences at the time in a way that has not been affected by later events or interpretations. People who stayed at home also cherished photographs of their loved ones. Photographs are snapshots of life, full of detailed information.

### QUESTIONS

- Are they coloured or black and white?
- Are they slides or prints?
- Are they large or small format?
- Where were they taken?
- What activities do they show?
- Can you detect the similarities and differences from life today?
- Is there any evidence of change over time?
- Do they give a full picture of the person's activities?
- Why might they have been taken?
- Why might the person have kept them?

Photographs that my family treasure help me understand my military heritage by:



# Official documents

1 What does this document tell us about this soldier?

Transferred to

**AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE.**  
Form B. 103. Received

No. 2296

Rank Pte Name HINES, J.

Unit 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion

Casualty Wounded slightly, C.I.R. 1525792.00 w. pd. d. 2/1/18

WOUNDED 2nd occ. Wounded 2nd occ. 1914/15  
 Reg. to Aust. for H. F. "Sardinia" Dist. "C" omb. 19/10/18  
 C.I.R. 1525792.00 pd. London 23/10/18 Reg. B.R. 1/11/18 Invalid  
 Returned to Australia per Sardinia Dist 163  
 Disembarked 3rd M.D. 27/12/18 for 2nd M.D. Kamerboord 1.3

1914/15 STAR  
 BRITISH WAR MEDAL  
 VICTORY MEDAL

DATE	PURPORT	REF. NO.
<u>2.2.19</u>	<u>Discharged 2nd M.D. (MU) BRO 8/8-1919</u>	<u>AP</u>
<u>20/5/19</u>	<u>"WILL" to <u>Adly 2nd M.D. M/107465</u></u>	
<u>16.10.20</u>	<u>WAR HISTORY INDEX 177</u> <u>Proceedings of Courts Martial filed in Attorney General's</u> <u>Department and Numbered 22886</u>	<u>RCR</u>

## INFORMATION

These are important in establishing the detailed facts of a person's service. They are the records created at the time and retained by authorities.

## QUESTIONS

- What is the document about?
- When was it issued?
- Why was it issued?
- To whom was it issued? Why?
- What information does it give?
- Is it likely to be accurate?
- Why would it have been kept?
- How was it made?

Things about this soldier that I learned from the document:

Official documents that my family treasure help me understand my military heritage by:

## Letters

1 Here are two examples of letters from the Western Front. Compare them and discuss what each tells you about the person, his experiences, his attitudes, and the impact of the war on him and others.

### INFORMATION

Letters to and letters from the service person are revealing sources of information. They can be personal records of experiences, attitudes and values. They can describe the impact of the war on those in the forces and those at home. They can be official and carry the direst messages or emotional and trace the deepest of relationships.

### QUESTIONS

- Where is the letter from?
- Who wrote it, and to whom?
- When?
- Why?
- Have any changes been made to it? Why?
- What is the tone of the letter?
- What specific information does it give?
- What might the reactions have been of the person receiving it?
- Does the writing, printing or typing give clues about the writer?
- Why might it have been kept?

Dearest Beat and Bill,

24/8/16

Just a line you must be prepared for the worst to happen any day. It is no use trying to hide things. I am in terrible agony ... Tomorrow I shall know the worst as the dressing [on his wounded leg] was to be left for 3 days and tomorrow is the third day it smells rotten. I was hit running out to see the other officer who was with me but badly wounded ... I got two machine gun bullets in the thigh. The Stretcher Bearers could not get the wounded out any way other than over the top and across the open. They had to carry me four miles with a man waving a red cross flag in front and the Germans did not open fire on us. Well dearest I have had a rest, the pain is getting worse and worse ... So cheer up dear I could write on a lot but I am nearly unconscious. Give my love to Dear Bill and yourself. Your loving husband Bert.  
[Lt H. W. Crowle died a few hours after writing this letter.]

9/8/16

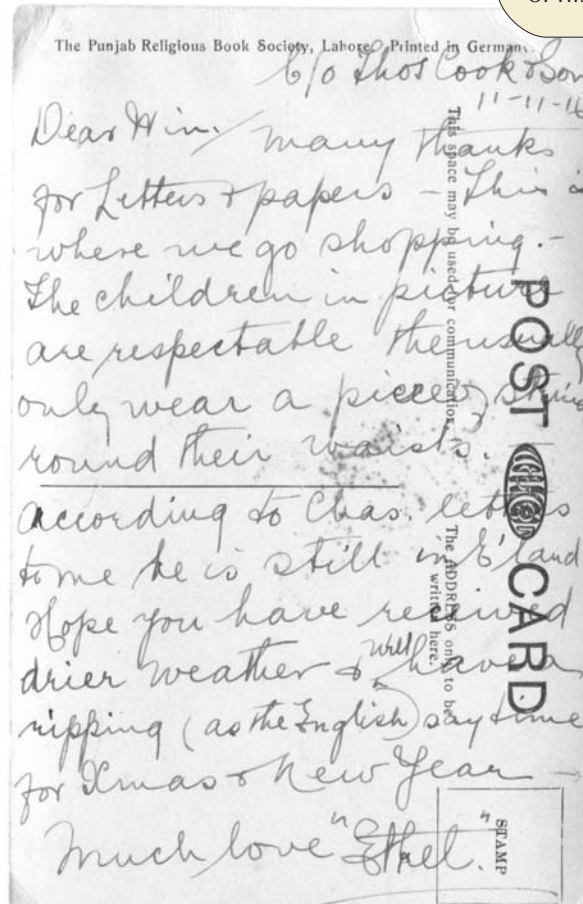
Well Darling one at 12 o'clock tonight ... we go over the parapet & then our fate is sealed—if I am lucky we'll be relieved I suppose within a week ... The place is like Hell darling but the sooner we get it over the better ... remember it is better to die for you & Country than to be a cheat of the empire. I'll try love for your sake to do well and come through ... God be with you Love for all Time ... Remember me to Baby when he is born — if a boy don't make him a tin soldier but should war break out, let him enlist & do his bit if not he'll be no son of mine.  
In Bill Gamage, *The Broken Years*, Penguin, Melbourne, 1990 page 248

[Capt. A. McLeod died of injuries four months later.]

Letters that my family treasure help me understand my military heritage by:

## Souvenirs

Here is a postcard that was sent back by a nurse to her family.



### INFORMATION

These can be important in telling us something about the feelings of a person at the time. A specially acquired object may be a seashell, an ornament or a bullet case. The story behind each is different. Some are sentimental, others 'touchstones of history'.

### QUESTIONS

- What is the item?
- What is it made of?
- Where did it come from?
- What is its purpose?
- Might it have been bought or 'souvenired'?
- Why might it have been acquired?
- For whom was it intended?
- Why might it have been kept by the person?

1 Why do you think she chose this card to send back?

2 What does it tell us about her experiences and her attitudes towards those experiences? (For example, would you say that she is shocked by poverty? Or that she is not happy nursing there?)

Souvenirs that my family treasure help me understand my military heritage by:

## Diary

Here is an extract from a diary entry by World War 1 soldier Albert Jacka (A), compared with the official account of the same action that he describes (B).

**A**

*Great battle at 3am. Turks capture large portion of our trench. D. Coy called into the front line. Lieut Hamilton shot dead. I lead a section of men and recaptured the trench. I bayoneted two Turks, shot five, took three prisoners and cleared the whole trench. I held the trench alone for 15 minutes against a heavy attack.*

**B**

For most conspicuous bravery on the night 19-20th May, 1915 at Courtney's Post, Gallipoli. Lance Corporal Jacka, while holding a portion of the trench with four men was heavily attacked. When all except himself were killed or wounded, the trench was rushed and occupied by seven Turks. Lance Corporal Jacka at once attacked them single handedly and killed the whole party, five by rifle fire and two with the bayonet.

Jacka was awarded the Victoria Cross for this deed—and was the first Australian to receive this award for bravery in World War 1. He was presented with the award in London on 29 September 1916.

**1** Do you think Jacka's diary brings out the significance of his action? Explain your reasons.

### INFORMATION

Many Australians kept diaries associated with their service. Often these were very brief, but occasionally they include revealing information and details of the person's experiences. These details can tell us much about people's experiences, attitudes and values at the time.

### QUESTIONS

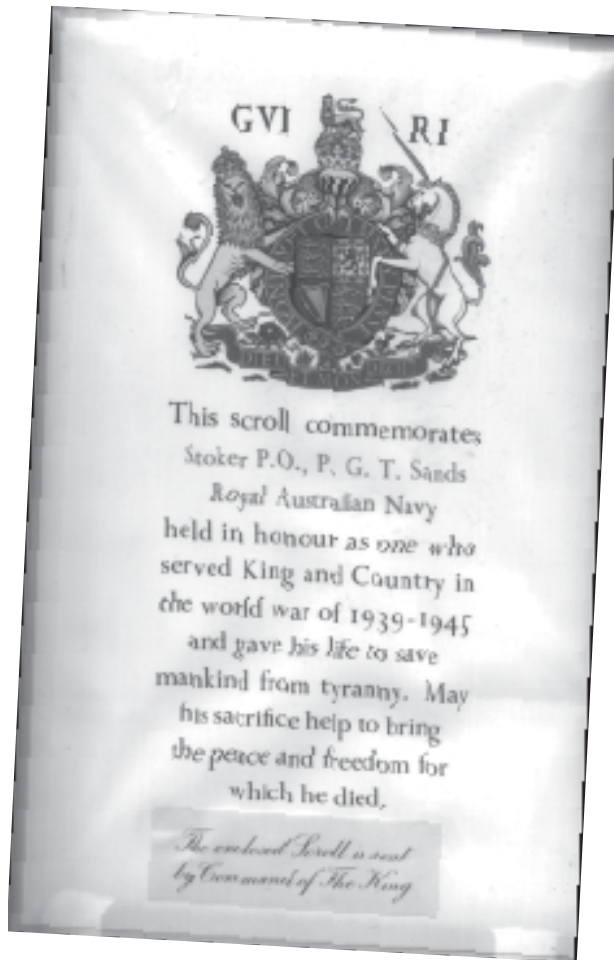
- When was the diary written?
- By whom?
- Why?
- Where?
- What detail does it give?
- What sort of things are emphasised? Why?
- Is it likely to be accurate?
- What does it tell us which we are unlikely to find elsewhere?

**2** What are the strengths and weaknesses of diaries as evidence of Australians' combat experiences?

Diaries that my family treasure help me understand my military heritage by:

## Commemorative items

Here is a commemorative plaque issued to the family of a sailor who was killed in action during World War 2. It was an attempt to honour and commemorate the sacrifice of the dead person, to comfort the relatives.



### INFORMATION

Commemorative objects were often awarded to people who served, and to the families of those who died on active service.

### QUESTIONS

- Who was it for?
- Who has given it?
- Who has received it?
- What is its purpose?
- What information does it give?
- What attitudes or values does it include?

1 What are the 'messages' in this scroll?

2 Do you think it would have comforted the relatives?

Commemorative items that my family treasure help me understand my military heritage by:

# Investigating Memorabilia **STEP 2**

## Placing it in time and place

**Most military memorabilia in Australia will be less than 100 years old. Some might be older.**

Here are some events in your life, and in the history of Australia. There are also some blank spaces in which you should write a brief description of any memorabilia items you have. Your task is to draw lines showing where the events occurred on the timeline and where the memorabilia fit. You should also mark where the memorabilia comes from or applies to on the map. Examples are provided for your guidance.

**General Events**

- When Australia federated
- When your school was built
- When you started school (primary or secondary or both)
- When your home was built
- When you were born
- The birth date of a parent, guardian or other significant adult in your life

**Some Military Events**

- World War 1 1914–1918
- World War 2 1939–1945
- Rwanda 1994
- British Commonwealth Occupation Forces in Japan 1945–1952
- Vietnam War 1962–1972
- Gulf War 1991
- Somalia 1992–1995
- Korean War 1950–1953
- Indonesian Confrontation 1962–1966
- Bougainville 1994–2003
- Malayan Emergency 1948–1960
- Iraq War 2003
- East Timor 1999
- Cambodia 1991–1993
- Solomon Islands 2003

before 1910	1911 to 1920	1921 to 1930	1931 to 1940	1941 to 1950	1951 to 1960	1961 to 1970	1971 to 1980	1981 to 1990	1991 to 2000	after 2001
-------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	--------------	------------

**Memorabilia items**

- [Blank box]
- [Blank box]
- [Blank box]
- Vietnam War letter (example)
- [Blank box]
- [Blank box]

**Investigating Memorabilia****STEP 3****Finding its history**

***The best way of finding out about memorabilia is to talk to the person who knows most about it.***

It might lead you to interview that person to find out more about his or her experience of a period of military conflict.

Here are two exercises to help you see ways of getting the most out of an interview.

**Exercise 1**

***Look at a photograph from the time and use it to ask questions that you would like to know the answers to.***

***Developing an Inquiry***

Look at this photograph. Imagine the person in the photograph was coming to talk to you. Select at least four aspects of this photograph that you could talk to the person about.

What's he thinking at the time?

What training has he had?

What were the conditions like?

Was he scared?

What equipment did he have?



(AWM FOD-71-254/VN)

Did he clash with the enemy?

What experiences did he have?

What happened to him after the war?

What did he think about the war?

Who else was there with him?

## Exercise 2

*Look at this example and use it to decide what is needed for an interview to be effective.*

### *example*

The students of a Year 9 class were interviewing a number of Vietnam veterans, to investigate just what they did, how this compares with the film image of the Vietnam War, and how the service has affected their lives.

The students were asked to develop six good questions that would help them to gather evidence about their main investigation.

Here are the questions from one group, and the answers of the person they interviewed. Look at the interview and then answer the questions that follow to decide if this was a good interview.

**1 Where did you serve?** *I served in Vung Tau, which was the supply base area, and what I did was to work out the food rations which would be sent to each different unit, and organise that food to be sent there from our big supply stock.*

**2 Did you kill anyone?** *No, I was not in any combat at all. The supply base where I served was very quiet, there was no contact with the enemy at all. The only danger was from the driving of some of the Americans who brought in the fresh food supplies in big refrigerated vehicles. I could tell you some interesting stories about them!*

**3 Is what you did like it is shown in the movies?** *No, because I was never in combat, and they don't usually show the ordinary supply jobs in the movies. They're all about action. The closest I have seen to the ordinariness of what we did was some of MASH. That was supposed to be about the Korean War, but it was really about the Vietnam War in a lot of ways.*

**4 What was being in combat like?** *Well, as I said before, I was never in combat. I went through some combat training, which was pretty scary, but no actual combat.*

**5 What was your job?** *As I said before, it was to work out the entitlement of food for all the different units, and organise it to be sent to them each day.*

**6 What did you get out of going to Vietnam?** *Personal things, I guess. A lot of people were interested in getting the tax free pay and the low interest war service home loan, but I learned a lot about myself, what I could do and what I could not. I went to Vietnam for a really silly reason, but while I would never wish the experience on anyone else, I certainly do not regret having gone.*

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer these questions.



### Evaluating this interview

1 Is enough basic information about the person revealed by the questions?

2 Were these the best six questions to ask to get the required information?

3 Are there any other questions which could have been asked in response to the information given? List them.

4 Are there any other faults with this interview? How could they be overcome?

5 Do you think the students got the best information possible from their interview? Explain your reasons.

6 Make up a list of things which might be needed for a good interview. Then compare your list with the suggestions on the following page and come up with your own final guidelines as a result.

### ***Suggested steps for a successful interview***

- Be interested in the subject matter.
- Have a clear focus—know why you are conducting an interview, and what you are trying to find out.
- Do your research to find out as much you can about the person, the historical background and setting.
- Make the purpose of your interview clear to the interviewee.
- Think about general topics, and work out clear and specific questions to ask.
- Listen to replies, and try to respond to them. This may mean you have to rephrase questions ‘on the spot’.
- Do not intrude—respect privacy and a reluctance on the part of the interviewee to talk.
- Be polite and considerate. The interviewee is helping you out, not the other way around.
- Use a sound recording device but ask permission first.
- Transcribe the interview later and summarise the main points.

### ***Act, but please be careful!***

If you do decide to speak to people about their experiences of the war, be very careful and sensitive. Some people do not like speaking about the past, others enjoy it greatly. Some people still have powerful and disturbing memories and strong feelings about the war. You have to understand and respect peoples’ attitudes about the past—and particularly their attitude to the enemy. You may disagree with their views but we need to understand that Australia and the world were different then. We must try to see how our world has been shaped by events from the past. We may have different attitudes, values and needs today. Understand and respect, but do not necessarily accept as accurate what you hear.

## **Investigating Memorabilia**    **STEP 4**    **Researching it further**

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***A good starting point for further research is your local library, and the many websites that are now easily accessible. Here are some basic sites that may help you gather information relevant to your information about your memorabilia, and that will link you to hundreds of other useful sites.***

- ANZAC Day Commemoration Committee of Queensland [www.anzacday.org.au](http://www.anzacday.org.au)
- Australian War Memorial [www.awm.gov.au](http://www.awm.gov.au)
- Land Forces of Britain, the Empire and Commonwealth [www.regiments.org](http://www.regiments.org)
- Australians at War [www.australiansatwar.gov.au](http://www.australiansatwar.gov.au)